(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Provisions of various labour laws are applicable to the establishments who engage the contract labour and whenever any violation of labour laws is reported, necessary action is taken by the Industrial Relation machinery of the State Governments and the Central Government in their respective spheres.

Auction of oil and gas blocks

*34. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI:

SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to launch its biggest ever auction of oil and gas exploration blocks under New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP)-VIII shortly;

(b) if so, whether the Global firms have been invited for bidding the oil and gas exploration blocks under NELP-VIII;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether the awarding of such blocks to companies will have any effect on the imports of oil and gas; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (e) The Government of India approved the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) in 1997 and it became effective in 1999. Since then licenses for exploration of oil and gas are being awarded through global competitive bidding system. Seven rounds of bidding have so far been completed under NELP. The number of blocks and contractual terms proposed to be offered under the forthcoming eighth round of New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP-VIII) has not been finalized. Global players will be invited when this round takes place.

The exploration activities in the new exploration blocks under NELP-VIII are likely to result in increased production of crude oil and natural gas, thereby enhancing the energy security of the country.

Dubious functioning of Satyam Computer Services

†*35.SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of CORPORATE AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recent exposure of the dubious role of Satyam Computer Services and the Price Water House Audit company has shaken the confidence of investors in companies;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there had been indication relating to the abovesaid company working in a dubious manner for many years;

(d) if so, whether Government has chalked out any additional measures to maintain a strict vigil on the working of companies; and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) In the statement made by Shri B Ramalinga Raju, the former Chairman of Satyam Computer Services Ltd. on 7.1.2009, there is indication of misstatements and falsification of accounts and financial statements of the company having taken place over the past several years.

(d) and (e) The statutory framework under the Companies Act, 1956, enables financial and other disclosures by companies and the necessary enforcement action by the Government in the event of any non-compliance/ violation in the course of working of companies. The Government takes necessary, appropriate action under the Companies Act, 1956 and other relevant laws, as warranted, in the course of administration thereof.

Drilling activity in Tripura

*36. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd. (ONGC) has minimized its drilling activities in Tripura now a days causing loss of work to the survey workers;

(b) whether it is also a fact that some of the works of ONGC have been entrusted to some private companies; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MURLI DEORA): (a) to (c) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has deployed three Departmental rigs in Tripura. In addition, one charter hire rig has been deployed with effect from October, 2008. During the financial year 2009-10, ONGC has planned to hire two rigs for enhancement of Exploration and Production (E&P) activities for meeting the additional Gas commitment for the power plants in 2011-12.

ONGC has opted for specialized contractual rigs in some cases in order to meet the time schedules with respect to committed work programmes, both in nomination and New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) acreages. While ONGC makes use of its own resources to the extent possible, some times, work is entrusted on contractual basis to undertake additional drilling and to meet specific requirement of specialized domain experts.

Strike in PSU oil companies

*37. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the officers of the Public Sector Oil Companies went on an indefinite strike in January this year;

(b) if so, the causes that led to the strike;

(c) whether demands from the striking employees were pending to be finalized;